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or animal. They can therefore have little appreciable dietetic importance.

(*b*) *Domestic animals.* We have seen from this account that ritual avoidances of food do not seriously affect the diet of large sections of the Bemba community. On the other hand it is not true to say that all available sources of food in the environment are exploited. The Bemba are not a pastoral people and could not keep cattle in large numbers because of the tsetse-fly. On the other hand sheep and goats are quite widely distributed in certain areas, and most households keep chickens and some pigeons. All these domestic animals are called *ifitekwa* or 'things kept', but in no case are *ifitekwa* kept primarily for meat or bred for that purpose. Goats or sheep may be given as a present to a chief or a European; dedicated to an ancestral spirit after successful recovery from illness; or given as compensation to an injured person for the loss of a limb or an eye. They may be killed and used as meat, but always on some such ceremonial occasion, never in case of pure hunger. Chickens are more numerous and less valuable, but even then a chicken is never killed 'just for food', even in the hunger season. Fowls are the ordinary present of honour for a chief or visitor of high status, and provide the ceremonial meal at a marriage or initiation ceremony. While there is no particularly sacred attitude towards chicken, a man will say, 'If I kill a chicken just to eat, I shall soon have none left.' That is to say he does not breed poultry scientifically, put down sittings of eggs, or calculate the number of chickens he may expect to get; nor does he make any attempt to feed them. Hens run about the village and lay their eggs wherever they please, and some of these sittings are finally hatched. But each new brood is regarded, with some justification, as a separate piece of good fortune for which the owner is not responsible, and which he is never certain will be repeated.[1] It is for this reason that he considers chickens should not be wasted or 'just eaten' and he will not part with eggs unless he can get money from a European for them. Teaching of scientific rearing of poultry would overcome the reluctance to use eggs. There is no fundamental magic belief at stake.

The Bemba attitude to pigeons is characteristic. These birds

[1] A number of magic rites are associated with the care of poultry such as the disposal of the eggshells at the crossroads, &c., and these may be taken as an indication of the measure of uncertainty the native feels on the question.

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are kept by one or two men in most villages and housed in elaborate pigeon houses built with considerable trouble and protected with magic rites. But they are hardly ever eaten because 'People want to keep many pigeons, so they are afraid to waste the seed' (i.e. to reduce the stock). They like to see the birds flying about the village. They are things kept as a sign of rank. They just flutter and flutter about. They show the rank of the owner of the pigeon house.'[1] A common saying is 'The domestic animals of rich people cause admiration like pigeons'[2] i.e. they wander here and there and give the effect of countless numbers.

Goats and sheep also add to the reputation of their owner. The reluctance of the Bemba to kill and use them for ordinary purposes seems to be based on two different attitudes. On the one hand these people are as ignorant of methods of rearing stock as they are of poultry breeding. They lack completely any pastoral tradition, and the way in which goats, for instance, are treated, makes it little short of miraculous that any survive. The Bemba children do not herd them or look after them, and it is not uncommon for the owner to forget to let his goats out of their pen to feed. A man buys a goat or sheep as a sort of gesture, probably because he wants to acquire possessions, and he puts it in a shed, but he never seems to have any idea of building up a herd or relying economically on the sale of meat. The milk is never used. Added to this the killing of so large an animal as a goat or a sheep has a particular significance for the native, and this makes him unwilling to slaughter except for some special ceremonial reason. A goat is something approaching a human being, and is used nowadays as a substitute for human sacrifices. It can also serve as a compensation for some serious bodily injury, in which case it will probably change hands but not be killed. It is interesting that the Bemba, who have substituted money payments for many of their old religious dues, feel that a financial compensation would be unsuitable in such a case. 'It is right to give a goat because it is a man who has been hurt.' There is even some indication that the Bemba believe that to kill a domestic animal might bring dangerous consequences, just as the murder of a man would. In this tribe the belief that the spirit of a murdered man returns as a haunting

[1] *Fitekwa fya bukankala. Fyakupukapuka: filelanga bukankala bwa kwa cibinda ca nkunda.*

[2] *Fitekwa fya bakankala fyakukumukapo fye nge nkunde.*

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when questioned, 'I am grinding here because I want to eat here. My heart is angry because my grandmother keeps scolding me.' A boy of 12 in another village seemed to be more assiduous than his fellows in fetching firewood. When I commented on his behaviour I was told, apparently as a quite sufficient explanation, that the child had left his own home in a neighbouring village because he did not like his mother's new husband. He had come to live with a more distant relation—a classificatory sister's husband—instead. With this more remote kinsman he evidently felt the need to ingratiate himself in order to establish his claim for support. The Bemba kinship system allows such great freedom of movement to young people that temporary changes of this kind from one eating group to another are quite frequent.[1] Thus the whole principle of the exchange of work for food is learnt as a practical expedient by children not yet in their teens, and it is on these reciprocal obligations to serve and to feed that the whole political and economic system of the tribe is based.

Organized Forms of Labour.

Outside the kinship group there are other recognized forms of labour. In the old days these included the institution of slavery by which a chief or notable acquired rights over the life and labour of men or women, and in return fed and protected them, and provided for their marriage and the upbringing of their children. Slaves, whether captives taken in battle (*ba mabuta*, i.e. of the bow), or Bemba deprived of liberty as a legal punishment, or given as compensation for some irreparable injury such as murder (*ba musoka*) or destruction of gardens,[2] lived as members of the owner's household group, sleeping in their own huts, but fed by him, and not possessing gardens or granaries of their own. No one would know the difference between a slave and a poor relative, I was told, except that the former worked harder and only ate the food left over by the household. Although slavery no longer exists, the

[1] The Bemba touchiness and readiness to detect criticism or slight is shown in childhood. Children who consider that they have been corrected over-harshly announce that they do not 'like' the offending relative any more, and it is not uncommon to say of a small boy of 10 or 12 that he does not like his father (*tatemwa kuli wishi*) and for him to move elsewhere for a time. His kinship system and type of housing makes it very possible for him to follow such inclinations.

[2] Or persons voluntarily enslaved *ua kulila*, i.e. usually after having been irreparably insulted.

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423 themselves if really hungry, provided they leave the cut stalks and sheaves of the maize openly in the field so that the owner may see that a kinsman has 'borrowed' food (*kuashima*), not a mere thief. Gourds or pumpkins may only be picked with the owner's permission. Sweet potatoes and cassava roots, neither reckoned as a staple food, nor regarded as essential substitutes during the hunger season, seem to be dug up much more freely by a man's relatives. Children, in particular, grub up roots from the garden of any near relative on either side of the family, saying indignantly if questioned, 'No, we are not stealing (*tatuleiba*). This is our place here (*tuli kumiesu*).'

•681 685 The theft of millet from gardens does not seem to be a common offence. The grain has got to be pounded before it is eaten, and this is inconvenient for a casual thief. He prefers to take maize cobs, gourds, or pumpkins, which can be quickly cooked and eaten as a snack, and which ripen in the season when food is short. The penalties for theft vary with the season of the year. If a man steals in the hunger months and comes and explains his predicament his theft is apparently treated lightly, and he is merely asked by the owner to return goods to the value of what he has eaten.[1] But a thief caught red-handed trying to conceal his crime can expect no mercy. In the old days, I was told, he was liable to be speared on the spot, but that if this summary justice was not exacted, he would in any case have to repay the owner far more than the worth of the stolen food, 'perhaps four times as much, because he had made the heart of the gardener hot'.[2] The same is true to-day. In 1930, near Chinsali, a thief suspected of stealing maize cobs over some weeks was finally caught in the act. He paid the owner 12*s.* damages for the theft of two maize cobs on the first occasion, and 7*s.* 6*d.* for one on the second without the case ever coming into court.[3] Another method of punishing a culprit, especially one 681 685 789 who has few material possessions with which to compensate for his theft, is to lay a conditional curse on some property of his, i.e. his own garden or granary. This is known as *ukusaka*. In this case the injured party places branches across the entrance to the thief's garden or granary and places a charm on them. He informs

[1] *Vide* rights of a hungry subject to take food from the chief's garden.
[2] Cf. the case of the owner who does not mind his relatives taking his mealies if they do not insult him by concealing the theft.
[3] The maize cobs would be sold at about 3*d.* for a basket of 6 or 8.

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the headman and chief what he has done, and will not consent to remove the curse until he has been fully compensated.[1]

During the harvest season rights of ownership are less strictly exacted, since food itself is plentiful. As one informant said, 'To steal heads of maize is theft because they ripen in the hunger months; to steal heads of Kaffir corn is not theft,' i.e. because there is food at that time.[2]

To protect their distant gardens from theft the Bemba resort to supernatural means only. Protective magic is used, but only to a small extent.[3] It is interesting to find that the Bisa, whose staple crop is cassava, which is readily stolen as it remains in the ground all the year round, regularly place in their gardens charms designed to afflict a possible thief with different types of illness. This custom, known as *ukuamba*, seemed to be universally practised on Cilubi Island. A man leaving home for a period would plant in a prominent place a stake with magic attached to it, and so strong was the belief in its powers that the owner himself was afraid to dig up the cassava on his return without first removing the charm. Among the Bemba, where the staple crop is less frequently stolen, such forms of protective magic seem to be, comparatively speaking, rare. Charms to be burned in a field to produce various diseases such as elephantiasis in garden thieves were described to me, but I never heard frequently of their use. In such cases I was told the culprit could only hope to recover if he confessed his guilt. A far more common practice is the use of a special form of curse, *ukulapishya*, uttered after a theft has been committed, not before. This is done when gourds or pumpkins are disappearing from a garden and the thief is unknown. I have heard such curses uttered constantly during the hunger months, when the pilfering of vegetables is quite frequent, and a woman has no means of guarding them. The usual procedure followed was to announce in a loud shout in the quiet of an evening some such statement as, 'All you people, listen! One of my pumpkins went yesterday and another the day before. Now I am angry. I am really going to curse. To-morrow I am going to curse. Really and truly I am.' On several such

[1] I never came across an actual case in which this was done and think the practice is growing rarer. Cf. also the use of protective magic in gardens.

[2] *Kukontole mise ya nyanje bupupu pantu shilepya pa nsala: kukontole mise ya masaka te bupupu.*

[3] Cf. p. 356.

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occasions whispered conversations followed and the theft, often the heedless act of a child, was confessed next day. Once the headman himself came to beg the angry woman not to proceed with her threat and himself brought compensation 'so that no one might die in the village'. Many such curses in fact remain as threats and form effective sanctions in that way. When actually uttered they are thought to invoke supernatural powers to punish the culprit. Bemba curse by the High God, Lesa, who is usually believed to strike guilty people with thunderbolts, or they curse by the dead chiefs of the land (*mfumu shye calo*).[1] Such a curse is thought to work automatically and can only be removed when the culprit has confessed and begged for mercy. The curser then gives beads to the spirits and prays, saying, 'You, my chiefs, we didn't understand everything. We beg mercy now. We cursed those children. We did not know. Now have mercy and do not kill them.'[2] The fear of the owner's curse appears to me to act even at the present day as a very efficient means of preventing petty garden thefts during the hunger months.

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Thus individual ownership of field crops is very clearly defined among the Bemba. It is interesting to note that bush foods are also subject to individual ownership rules whenever it is possible to exert them. Rights over meat and fish are described fully in Chap. XIII, but it is worth mentioning that natives mark as their own trees covered with caterpillar grubs so that they may come and gather them when they have grown sufficiently large and succulent for their taste. The man who first discovers a swarm of wild bees will also mark the tree in which they have settled for his own.

Rights over Granaries.

Control over the contents of the Bemba granary are governed by more complex rules. Roughly speaking, the labour given to the production of the crop gives a man the ultimate right of disposal, but this is subject to the superior claims of certain older relatives and ultimately to that of the chief himself. That is to say, the

[1] For instance, 'A man has stolen my food. I give him to the chief. I give him to Ba Matipa (the tutelary deity of the neighbourhood). Let him (Ba Matipa) come and eat that man' (*Umuntu ulengibila filyo. Nakupe mfumu. Nakupe Ba Matipa. Bese bakulye*). Kasakatula village, near Shiwa Ndandu, 1931.

[2] (*Mwe shyamfumu shyonse. Tatuishibe fyonse. Twapápáta nomba. Twalipishya bana balya. Tatuishibe. Nomba twapapata. Mwilabepaya.*)

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is functioning inefficiently at the present time (cf. p. 264) it is the only means by which the political machinery of the tribe continues to exist.

Tribute as Rent.

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It will be asked at once how far this tribute in labour and kind can be classed as rent? If by this term we mean a fixed amount of work or goods given in return for the right to use a fixed amount of land, then obviously the dues of the Bemba chief cannot be so described. They are part of a series of mutual obligations observed between subject and chief, of which the right to land is one of the gains to the commoner, and the right to service just one of a series of chiefly prerogatives. To make the situation clearer we should list the advantages both parties gained by the arrangement. Why did the commoner work for the chief? Partly because he was afraid of his power and partly because there were positive inducements to do so. We saw that a commoner who made a garden in the chief's *icalo* without permission was liable to have his crops seized in the old days. Some natives now say that refusal to work *umulasa* or *ukutula* would have meant mutilation in pre-European times: others argue, 'No. Since it would be stupid to cut off the hand of a man who would then be unable to work *umulasa* for his chief again.' One man told me that with the first default a man would have been scolded, and at the second his chickens and granary would have been seized. But in actual fact no old man I talked to could remember an actual instance of a man refusing to pay his dues, and I think such occasions were probably limited to open acts of defiance on the part of powerful young members of the royal clan trying to set up power on their own. Of commoners I constantly got the answer, *Ukuti bakana shyani?*, 'And why should they refuse?', with genuine surprise in the tone. The fact that the Bemba believed that their gardens were unlikely to yield without the chief's blessing has been stressed again and again in these pages. While some natives deny that the *imipashi* would refuse their beneficence to men who refused to work for their chief or give tribute, others assert equally emphatically that this is so, and all are convinced that it is definitely unlucky to offend him. To say of a chief, a white man, or any one in high authority that he is angry (*ukufulwa*) is a serious thing, even at the present day. Small lapses are not expected to be followed automatically by

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supernatural punishment, but a series of broken obligations such as really to offend a chief are viewed with apprehension by young men as well as old.

Besides this it was the positive aim of every Bemba to win the good will of his chief as we have seen, and the headman who willingly brought workers for the *mfumu* was sure of favours sooner or later. It is possible to watch a headman courting the chief in this way even to-day, and he himself uses any privileges he has had confirmed under the Native Courts Ordinance, such as the right to give a man permission to build a village, to reward any subject who tries to please him.

The tribute labourers got food and beer during the visit and they worked under pleasant conditions in large gangs of friends. Even during my visit I never heard complaints of *umulasa* where the chiefs had means of feeding their workers, and the visit to the capital is considered an opportunity to meet relatives and celebrities, to put grievances before the chief, or to transact any other business. The people still definitely prefer their ruler to have a big granary. It gives them, I think, a sense of security—a feeling of certainty that there will be food at the capital and a knowledge that they are working for a powerful and successful man (cf. p. 214). Besides this, a hungry man has technically the right to call upon his chief for help. I did not hear of this claim being made very often, but still, in a sense, the *umulasa* garden and *umulasa* granary are recognized as belonging to the people. A man can steal from the tribute garden of a chief, but not from those of his wives, and I have sometimes heard old natives speak with pride of 'our' granary, adding, 'It was we who filled it to overflowing'. Thus the commoner got by his labour the sense of supernatural support, a personal approach to his chief, food in return for his work, support in time of starvation, and, as we shall see, leadership in economic pursuits. The chief in return got extra supplies of food to distribute, the means of supporting his tribal council, the necessary labour for tribal undertakings such as road-building, and last, but not least, prestige (cf. Chap. XII).

In brief the extravagant claims of the Bemba king to own all his land and everything that grows or lives in it, only gave him the right to exact small regular dues on the labour and produce of his people, and to call on them for further help in times of emergency. These levies exist, but are very much reduced to-day. They

624 blessing the gardens before firing, the seeds before sowing, and the first fruits of a number of crops. He must organise the payment of tribute and labour to the district chief and pass on chiefly orders and requests. His privileges include the right to personal service from younger relatives and tribute of beer and/or meat. Primarily, however, the position is valued not for economic advantage but for the authority it brings, the command over a small following and the favour of a chief. The sanctions for this authority consist mainly in the headman's popularity, the strength of kinship ties between him and the villagers and their belief that it is dangerous to allow an elder relative to die while cherishing a sense of injury. Ultimately, of course, the headman's power depends on the support of his territorial chief and nowadays of the British Administration.

621 The functions of the different types of Bemba chief differ only in de-
622 gree from those of the headman. Like a headman, a chief is in charge of his own village, his *musumbo*, and he tries to maintain and augment this community by acquiring a reputation for popularity and generosity. A chief's village in the old days was described as having thousands of inhabitants. Big chiefs' villages observed by Richards in 1934 had 400 to 600 huts. They were divided into quarters (*fitenta*) ruled over by loyal supporters of the chief, known as *bafilolo*.

622 Besides administering his own village the chief was responsible for mak-
[692] ing and confirming the appointment of headmen; and presiding over a court composed of advisers mainly drawn from his own village. Witchcraft cases
[681] had to be brought to a chief and only the more important among them could administer the poison ordeal by *mwafi*. The chief could in the old days punish by savage mutilations and by selling a man into slavery. Economically the chief was responsible for initiating agricultural activities by performing the necessary rite at the time of tree-cutting, sowing or harvesting. With the tribute labour at his disposal he made big gardens and built gran-
[721] aries from which he fed his courtiers, messengers and workers. The chief initiated military raids and other forms of warfare, and the great Bemba chiefs maintained their monopoly of Arab guns which they traded for slaves. Bemba country was, in fact, an area of strong centralised government. The chieftains of the Aushi, Unga and other associated tribelets were on a much smaller scale and weaker in political organisation.

[781] But the most important and characteristic activities of the Bemba chiefs are ritual. They are reckoned to have in their own persons power to bless
[763] and curse. They have to be protected from contact with death and to keep sex taboos of various kinds for the welfare of the whole territory. It is probable that the Bemba Paramount Chief in the old days might have been described as a "divine king" in Fraser's sense of the word; he was strangled
[769] when on the point of death so that his spirit should pass into the land. The Bemba chief derives his ritual power from the fact that he has succeeded to the names of dead chiefs and is thus enabled to call on a long line of ances-
622 tral spirits. Chiefs possess sacred relics - usually stools - which are
778 known as *bafinye* and kept in special huts protected by "wives of the dead" or descendants of wives of earlier chiefs. An approach to the ancestral spirits is made at these shrines. Chiefs also sacrifice at the deserted shrines of their predecessors (*mfuba*) and at other spirit centres in the area.

Much of their power depends on the keeping of sex taboos and the

South Africa Company and were given courts in 1924. 622

LEGAL SYSTEM

In the past the judicial officer at the capital was the Mwaimcita.(1) An appeal from his decisions could be made to the Kazembe.(2) The *mwafi* (poison-cup ordeal) was administered to the accused man by his nearest relative.(3) The penalty for witchcraft was always death.(4) Adultery, homicide and theft were punished by death, amputation of limbs or genitals, or sale into slavery.(5) Travellers commented on the number of natives, even among the court officials, with mutilated hands and cropped ears.(6) Within the *cibote* homicide seems to have been compoundable. 681 [732]

LAND

The conquered Shila continued to be recognised by the Lunda as the owners of the land, and were consulted when fresh land was wanted for settlement. At present all suitable land in the immediate vicinity of villages is under cultivation but there remains a sufficiency of uncultivated land farther away. 311 423

SLAVERY

Slaves, sold to Arab and Swahili traders, were mostly recruited from among convicted criminals.(7) Livingstone gives this as the reason for Mwaruma's reluctance to purchase Kazembe slaves.(8) 567

OTHER CULTURAL FEATURES

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS, DRESS etc.

"The people are black, dolichocephalic, woolly-headed, thin-lipped, of medium stature."(9) The interminglings of tribes has tended to eliminate differences of physical type. Facial scarification and tattooings, once distinctive tribal marks, have become mere fanciful embellishments. Chipping of the upper front teeth is now rare. 141 142 304

On ceremonial and ritual occasions in the past the body was smeared with *mpemba*(10) (a white chalky substance extracted from the river bed) and the hair, worn long and plaited or made into a knob,(11) was powdered with *mbula* (reddish wood-dust).(12) Rubbing earth on arms and breast was a token of the respect due to chiefs.(13) The dress consisted of a bark-cloth skirt, *nyunda*,(14) or a cotton loin-cloth.(15) 302 291

(1) Gamitto, II, p.18.
(2) ibid.
(3) Holmes, p.55.
(4) Burton, p.129.
(5) ibid, p.40.
(6) Livingstone, I, p.248.
(7) Livingstone, I, pp.302-3; II, p.62.
(8) ibid., II, pp.28, 35.
(9) Valdez II, p.241.
(10) Burton, p.103; Gamitto, I, p.307.
(11) Livingstone, I, p.263.
(12) Burton, p.82.
(13) ibid., pp.45, 312; Valdez, II, p.227.
(14) Valdez, op.cit., p.219.
(15) Burton, p.127.